

that such part of the staff as is designated minority staff, shall be under the general supervision of the ranking member and under the immediate direction of the minority staff director.

(2) Any member of the committee should feel free to call upon the staff at any time for assistance in connection with committee business. Members of the Senate not members of the committee who call upon the staff for assistance from time to time should be given assistance subject to the overriding responsibility of the staff to the committee.

(3) The staff's primary responsibility is with respect to bills, resolutions, treaties, and nominations.

In addition to carrying out assignments from the committee and its individual members, the staff has a responsibility to originate suggestions for committee or subcommittee consideration. The staff also has a responsibility to make suggestions to individual members regarding matters of special interest to such members.

(4) It is part of the staff's duty to keep itself as well informed as possible in regard to developments affecting foreign relations and in regard to the administration of foreign programs of the United States. Significant trends or developments which might otherwise escape notice should be called to the attention of the committee, or of individual Senators with particular interests.

(5) The staff shall pay due regard to the constitutional separation of powers between the Senate and the executive branch. It therefore has a responsibility to help the committee bring to bear an independent, objective judgment of proposals by the executive branch and when appropriate to originate sound proposals of its own. At the same time, the staff shall avoid impinging upon the day-to-day conduct of foreign affairs.

(6) In those instances when committee action requires the expression of minority views, the staff shall assist the minority as fully as the majority to the end that all points of view may be fully considered by members of the committee and of the Senate. The staff shall bear in mind that under our constitutional system it is the responsibility of the elected members of the Senate to determine legislative issues in the light of as full and fair a presentation of the facts as the staff may be able to obtain.

(b) Restrictions.—

(1) The staff shall regard its relationship to the committee as a privileged one, in the nature of the relationship of a lawyer to a client. In order to protect this relationship and the mutual confidence which must prevail if the committee-staff relationship is to be a satisfactory and fruitful one, the following criteria shall apply:

(A) members of the staff shall not be identified with any special interest group in the field of foreign relations or allow their names to be used by any such group;

(B) members of the staff shall not accept public speaking engagements or write for publication in the field of foreign relations without specific advance permission from the staff director, or, in the case of minority staff, from the minority staff director. In the case of the staff director and the minority staff director, such advance permission shall be obtained from the chairman or the ranking member, as appropriate. In any event, such public statements should avoid the expression of personal views and should not contain predictions of future, or interpretations of past, committee action; and

(C) staff shall not discuss their private conversations with members of the committee without specific advance permission from the Senator or Senators concerned.

(2) The staff shall not discuss with anyone the proceedings of the committee in closed

session or reveal information conveyed or discussed in such a session unless that person would have been permitted to attend the session itself, or unless such communication is specifically authorized by the staff director or minority staff director. Unauthorized disclosure of information from a closed session or of classified information shall be cause for immediate dismissal and may, in the case of some kinds of information, be grounds for criminal prosecution.

RULE 15—STATUS AND AMENDMENT OF RULES

(a) Status.—In addition to the foregoing, the Committee on Foreign Relations is governed by the Standing Rules of the Senate, which shall take precedence in the event of a clear inconsistency. In addition, the jurisdiction and responsibilities of the committee with respect to certain matters, as well as the timing and procedure for their consideration in committee, may be governed by statute.

(b) Amendment.—These rules may be modified, amended, or repealed by a majority of the committee, provided that a notice in writing of the proposed change has been given to each member at least 48 hours prior to the meeting at which action thereon is to be taken. However, rules of the committee which are based upon Senate rules may not be superseded by committee vote alone.

GUARDIAN INDUSTRIES

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, I want to recognize Guardian Industries, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. Guardian has been a leader in the glass, building, and automotive parts manufacturing industries and an important contributor to Michigan's economy for many years.

Guardian Industries was established in 1932 as Guardian Glass Company. What began as a small windshield fabrication business in Detroit, MI, grew to become a large-scale operation with the opening of its first float glass assembly plant in 1970. Since then, Guardian has built or acquired numerous fabrication plants throughout the world and diversified its business through the purchase and development of new technologies and methods of production.

Over the years, Guardian Industries has steadily grown to become one of the world's chief manufacturers of float glass and fabricated glass products and the world's largest producer of mirrors. Guardian has also become a major player in the building materials and distribution business and a leading supplier of exterior products to the automotive industry.

During its 75 years of existence, Guardian Industries has made a significant contribution to Michigan's economy. With a global workforce of over 19,000 employees, including about 1,000 in southeast Michigan, Guardian has demonstrated its commitment to making Michigan's economy a leader in manufacturing and technological development. Guardian Industries also plays an important role in community improvement throughout southeastern Michigan. Through its awarding of scholarships to local students pursuing advanced degrees and its financial support of the Detroit Symphony Orches-

tra, Guardian has shown a commitment to strengthening the fiber of community in Michigan.

I know my colleagues join me in commending the tremendous effort and hard work of the many employees of Guardian Industries over the years and wish them many more years of success and growth.

LATIN AMERICA

Mr. OBAMA. Mr. President, later today, President Bush will start on a 6-day visit to five countries in the Western Hemisphere: Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico.

The trip comes at an important time for the region and for U.S. relations with our hemispheric neighbors. In an historic convergence, during a 13-month period beginning in November 2005 and ending this past December, a dozen countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean held Presidential elections. Those elections are a testament to the tremendous democratic strides made throughout the Americas during the past two decades and saw governments elected to power that span the ideological spectrum.

In many ways, the election results symbolize the important political, economic, and social change occurring throughout the Americas. As many have noted, the elections gave voice to a yearning across the hemisphere for social and economic development—a yearning among tens of millions of people for a better life. This is a welcome development and a challenge to all of us who wish to see the Americas continue down a path of democracy with justice, because, while we should welcome this democratic call for change, we must recognize that hard and steady work lies ahead to make these hopes a reality.

That a desire for fundamental change has been expressed through the ballot box is an enormous stride forward. Too often, change in the Americas has occurred in an anti-democratic fashion. Those days must permanently be put to rest. All citizens of the Americas have a fundamental right to live in freedom and to express themselves through robust democratic institutions.

That a desire for expanded prosperity has been given such clear voice raises the stakes. Governments must now do more to address the basic needs and aspirations of their people in an effective, democratic, and sustainable way. A failure to fulfill the most basic functions of government, and a failure to create the conditions in which tens of millions across the Americas can realize their hopes and break free of poverty could undo these gains. The denial of opportunity is now the most significant threat to the consolidation of democracy in the region.

Unfortunately, the elections and this desire for change have occurred at a time when U.S. prestige and influence have fallen to depths not seen in at